



ALLAN RAMSAY.



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THE
FAIR ASSEMBLY,
A. K. Ramsay (H. 10)
POEM.

*Jocabethia virgo
Inchoat, & gestu cantum comitante figurat.*

MILLAR

*Miriam presiding o'er the Female Throng,
Begins, and suits the Movement to the Song.*



EDINBURGH

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to the Cross-Well, M. DCC. XXIII.



TO THE
MANAGERS,

Right HONOURABLE LADIES,

HOW much is our whole Nation indebted to Your Ladyships for Your reasonable and laudable Undertaking to introduce Politeness amongst us, by a cheerful Entertainment, which is highly for the Advantage of both Body and Mind, in all that is becoming in the Brave and Beautiful; well foreseeing that a barbarous Rusticity ill suits them, who in fuller Years must act with an Address superior to the common Class of Mankind; and it is undeniable, that nothing pleases more, nor commands more Respect than an easy, disengaged and genteel Manner. What can be more disagreeable, than to see one with a stupid Impudence saying and acting Things the most shocking amongst the Polite, or others (in plain Scots) blate and bumbaz'd, fyking how to behave, conscious of their own Want of Breeding, sit upon Nettles all the Time that their ill Luck throws them into good Company.

Warm'd with these Reflections, and the Beautyfulness of the Subject, my Thoughts have made their Way in the following Stanza's, which, with Humility I beg Leave to present to Your Ladyships.

'Tis amazing to imagine, that any are so destitute of good Sense and Manners, as to drop the least unfavourable Sentiment against the FAIR ASSEMBLY. 'Tis to be own'd, with Regrate, that the best of Things have been abused. The Church has been, and in many Countries is the chief Place for Assignations that are not warrantable. Wine, one of Heaven's kindly Blessings, may be used to one's Hurt. The Beauty of the FAIR, which is the great Preserver of Harmony and Society, has been the Ruin of many. Learning, which assists in raising the Mind of Man up to the Class of Spirits, has given many a one's Brain a wrong Cast. So Places design'd for healthful and mannerly Dancing, have, by People of an unhappy Turn, been debauch'd by introducing Gaming, Drunkenness and indecent Familiarities. But will any argue from these, that we must have no Churches, no Wine, no Beauties, no Literature, nor Dancing? Forbid it Heaven!

Noble and worthy Ladies, whatever is under Your auspicious Conduct must be improving and beneficial in every Respect. May all the fair Daughters copy after such virtuous and delightful Patterns as You have been and continue to be: That You may be long a Blessing to the rising Generation, is the sincere Prayer of,

May it please your Ladyships,

Edinr. June 28th,

Your most Faithful and

1723.

Humble Servant,

ALLAN RAMSAY.



T H E

FAIR ASSEMBLY.

A POEM, in the Royal* Stanza.

*Soon after them all dancing in a Row,
The comely Virgins came with Girlands dight,
As fresh as Flowers that in Green Meadows grow,
When Morning Dew upon their Leaves doth light.*

SPENCER.

A WAKE, *Thalia*, and defend,
With chearfu' Carroling,
Thy bonny Care, ---- thy Wings extend,
And bear me to your Spring;
That Harmony full Force may lend
To Reasons that I bring ----
Now *Caledonian* Nymphs attend,
For 'tis to you I sing.

* So called, being invented by *James the First, King of Scots*, whose incomparable Poem in these Measures will be admired as long as Images justly represented give Pleasure in flowing Numbers and sonorous Rhyme, when the Sense is as disagag'd as if spoke in Prose.

II.

As lang as Minds main Organs wear,

Compos'd of Flesh and Blood,

We ought to keep them hale and clear,

* With Exercise and Food.

Then, but Debate, it will appear

That Dancing must be good,

It stagnant Humors sets a Steer,

And fines the purple Flood.

III.

DISEASES, Heaviness and Spleen,

And ill Things mony mae,

That gar the lazy fret and grane,

With Visage dull and blaë.

'Tis Dancing can do mair alain

Than Drugs frae far away,

To ward aff these, make nightly Pain,

And sour the shining Day.

IV.

HEALTH is a Prize, ---- yet meikle mair

In Dancing we may find;

It adds a Lustre to the Fair,

And when the Fates unkind

Cloud

* The wise for Health on Exercise depend,
GOD never made his Works for Man to mend. Dryd.

Cloud with a blate and aukward Air
 A Genius right refin'd,
 † The sprightly Art helps to repair
 This Blemish on the Mind.

V.

How many do we daily see,
 * Right scrimp of Wit and Sense,
 Who gain their Aims aft eafilie
 By well bred Confidence.
 Then whate'er helps to qualifie
 A rustick Negligence,
 Maun without Doubt a Duty be,
 And shou'd give nae Offence.

VI.

CEASE moody Mortals to reprove
 † What's lawfu', blyth and chaste;
 Its skaithless in a Dance to move,
 If gracefully exprest:

Sacred

† Since nothing appears to me to give Children so much becoming Confidence and Behaviour, and so raise them to the Conversation of those above their Age, as Dancing, I think they should be taught to dance as soon as they are capable of learning it. For tho' this consists only in outward Gracefulness of Motion; yet I know not how, it gives many Thoughts and Carriage more than any Thing. *Lock.*

* It is certain that for Want of a competent Knowledge in this Art of Dancing, which should have been learned when young, the Publick loses many a Man of exquisite Intellectuals and unbiass'd Probity, purely for Want of that so necessary Accomplishment, Assurance; while the pressing Knave or Fool shoulders him out, and gets the Prize. *Mr. Weaver.*

† ----- *Tempus saltandi.*

Deinde redeunte Jiphthacho Mitxam in domum suam; ecce filia ejus exibat obviam ei cum tympanis & cum choris.

Adhuc adificaturus sum te, adificeris, virgo Israël, adhuc ornabit te tympanis tuis, & procedes cum choro ludentium.

Sacred and humane Laws approve,

Then set your Minds to rest,

Since the maist worthy seem to love

The FAIR ASSEMBLY best.

VII.

MATES mayna there in Mirkness meet,

But midst a Bleez of Candle;

Is that like saunt'ring on the Street,

Like you wha Doxies dandle:

Pray learn to be some mair discreet,

And mince your mumb'ling Scandal,

Subjects like them sae fair and sweet,

It sets ye ill to handle.

VIII.

GAE hunt Diseases in the Dark,

Dull Hippoc's, and be civil;

Pursue with Pith your Mid-night Wark,

Be thresh'd, or thresh your Rival:

Wha ertle at the Marriage Mark,

Evites these Paths are evil;

They keep alive the heav'nly Spark,

* And ding auld Doctor Divel.]

His

* This Line would require a long and learned Note, but I shall leave the Honour of it to some unborn Scaliger or Heinsius.

IX.

His Doctrine's dung, when equal Pairs

Together joyn their Hands,

And vow to sooth ilk other's Cares,

In haly wedlock Bands;

Sae when to dance the Maid prepares,

And flush'd with Sweetness stands,

At her the wounded Lover stares,

And yields to Heaven's Commands.

X.

† THE first Command he soon obeys,

While Love inspires ilk Notion,

His wishing Look his Heart displays,

While his lov'd Mate's in Motion:

He views her with a blyth Amaze,

And drinks with deep Devotion

That happy Draught, that throu' our Days

Is own'd a cordial Potion.

XI.

THE Cordial which conserves our Life,

And makes it smooth and easy;

Then ilka Wanter wale a Wife,

Or Eild and Humdrums seize ye,

B

Whase

† *Disit eis Deus, satisficite, angescite & implete terram.*

Whae Charms can silence Dumps or Strife,
 And frae the Rake releafe ye,
 Attend th' ASSEMBLY, where there's Rife
 Of virtuous Maids to please ye.

XII.

THESE modest Maids inspire the Muse,
 In flowing Strains to shaw
 Their Beauties, which she likes to rule,
 And let the Envious blaw:

That Task she canna well refuse,

Wha sinle says them Na ---

To paint *Bellinda*, first we chuse,

With Breasts like driven Snaw.

XIII.

LIKE Lilly Banks, see how they rise,

With a fair Glen between,

Where living Streams, blew as the Skyes,

Are branching upward seen,

To warm her Mouth, where Rapture lyes,

And Smiles, that banish Spleen;

Wha strikes with Love and fast Surprise,

Where e'er she turns her Een.

XIV.

Sabella gracefully complete,
 Streight as the Mountain Pine,
 Like Pearl and Rubies set in Jet,
 Her lovely Features shine:
 In her the Gay and Solid meet,
 And blended are so fine,
 That when she moves her Lips or Feet,
 She seems some Power Divine.

XV.

O *Daphne*, sweeter than the Dawn,
 When Rays glance on the Height,
 Diffusing Gladness o'er the Lawn,
 With Strakes of rising Light:
 The dewy Flowers when newly blawn,
 Come short of that Delight,
 Which thy far fresher Beauties can
 Afford our joyfu' Sight.

XVI.

How easy fits sweet *Celia's* Dress,
 Her Gate how gently free;
 Her Steps, throu'out the Dance, express
 The justest Harmony:
 And when she sings, all must confess,
 Wha're blest to hear and see,
 They'd deem't their greatest Happiness
 To enjoy her Company.

XVII.

AND wha can ca' his Heart his ain,
 That hears *Amintha* speak?
 Against Love's Arrows Shields are vain,
 When he aims frae her Cheek;
 Her Cheek, where Roses free from Stain,
 In Glows of Youdith beek;
 Unmingl'd Sweets her Lips retain,
 These Lips she ne'er shou'd steek.

XVIII.

UNLESS when fervent Kisses close
 That Av'new of her Mind,
 Throu' which true Wit in Torrents flows,
 As speaks the Nymph design'd;
 The Brag and Toast of Wits and Beaus,
 And Wonder of Mankind,
 Whase Breast will prove a blest Repose,
 To him with whom she'll bind.

XIX.

SEE with what Gayety, yet grave,
Serena swims along,
 She moves a Goddess 'mang the lave,
 Distinguish'd in the Thrang.
 Ye Sourocks, hasslines Fool, haf Knave,
 Wha hate a Dance or Sang,
 To see this stately Maid behave,
 Twad gie your Hearts a Twang.

You

XX.

YOUR Hearts I said I, trowth I'm to blame,
 I had amaist forgotten,
 That ye to nae sic Organ claim,
 Or if ye do, 'tis rotten.
 A Saul with sic a thowless Flame,
 Is sure a silly Sot ane ;
 Ye scandalize the humane Frame,
 When in our Shape begotten.

XXI.

THESE Lurdanes came just in my Light,
 As I was tenting *Chloe*,
 With jet black Een that sparkle bright,
 She's all o'er form'd for Joy;
 With Neck and Waist, and Limbs as tight
 As her's wha drew the Boy,
 Frae feeding Flocks upon the Height,
 And fled with him to *Thoy*.

XXII.

NOW *Myra* dances, mark her Mien,
 Sae disengag'd and gay,
 Mixt with that Innocence that's seen
 In bonny Ew-bught *May*,
 Wha wins the Garland on the Green,
 Upon some Bridal-Day,
 Yet she has Graces for a Queen,
 And might a Scepter sway.

WHAT

XXIII.

WHAT Lays, *Calista*, can commend
 The Beauties of thy Face,
 Whose Fancy can sue touring friend,
 Thy Merits a' to trace:

Frae 'boon the Starns, some Bard, descend,
 And sing her ev'ry Grace,
 Whose wondrous Worth may recommend
 Her to a God's Embrace,

XXIV.

A Seraph wad our *Aikman* paint,
 Or draw a lively Wit,
 The Features of a happy Saint,
 Say, art thou fond to hit?
 Or a *Madona* Compliment,
 With Lincaments maist fit,
 Fair Copies thou need'st never want,
 If bright *Calista* fit.

XXV.

Mella the heaviest Heart can heez,
 And sourest Thoughts expell,
 Her Station grants her Rowth and Ease,
 Yet is the sprightly *Belle*
 As active as the eydent Bees,
 Wha rear the Waxen-Cell,
 And place her in what Light you please,
 She still appears Her sell.

XXVI.

BEAUTIES on Beauties come in View

Sae thick, that I'm afraid

I shall not pay to Ilk their Due,

Till *Phœbus* lend mair Aid;

But this in general will had true,

And may be safely said,

There's ay a something shining new

In ilk delicious Maid.

XXVII.

WHAT tends the FAIR ASSEMBLY Ha',

Where nae By-Room is found,

Our Benches fixt upon the Wa'

Where all are seen around;

For stronger Liquors at your Ca'

Than sober Tea, that's found;

For here nae Rake out Dice dare draw,

To gi'e anes Purse a Wound.

XXVIII.

As against th' ASSEMBLY speak,

The rudest Sauls betray,

When MATRONS Noble, Wise and Meek

Conduct the healthfu' Play:

Here they appear nae Vice dare keek,

But to what's Good gives Way,

The Night, soon as the Morning Creek

Has usher'd in the Day.

XXIX.

DEAR govern with a chearful Air,
 And justly kind Regard,
 Thou'lt with the Success of their Care,
 They think their Pains well war'd:
 Thus they in the Diversion share,
 Viewing their springing Breed
 Of sprightly Lads and Virgins fair,
 Whom they delight to guard:

XXX.

DEAR *Ed'nburgh*, shaw thy Gratitude,
 And of sic Friends make sure,
 Wha strive to make our Minds less rude,
 And help our Wants to cure,
 Acting a generous Part and good,
 In Bounty to the Poor;
 Sic Virtues, if well understood,
 Shou'd ev'ry Heart allure.

XXXI.

WELL may the FAIR ASSEMBLY be,
 And may they blooming Spring,
 Ilk ane up to a fruitfu' Tree,
 And forth brave Branches bring.
 LAUREL, accept these Lays frae me,
 Whom Truth engag'd to sing,
 Wha threep the contrair, tell a Lie,
 Adieu, — GOD save the KING.

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F I N I S.

